**Greasers**

Oh the **audacity**! What are these boys wearing? This was the thought in many adult minds when they took one look at the post-war teenage group… the Greasers.



**Post-war American Fashion**

Post-war America was used to extreme changes taking place, especially after the war. Still, adults were still not prepared for the **drastic** wardrobe change that took place amongst teens.

During the war it had was **imperative** that fabrics were not overused any more than needed to assure enough was available for the military. When the war was over the way was paved for new styles, with no limitation of fabric.

Teenagers were able to work now, they had jobs, they had money, and they were eager to spend it. What better way to express themselves and blow some cash then through some new clothes? Whilst adults were giving in to the **luxury** of Dior’s New Look style of **glamorous** corsets and padding, teenagers were looking to embrace other styles of clothing. Some average teenagers **embodied** a fashion style labeling them as a “preppie” with full mid-length skirts and button down shirts and ties.



*Dior’s New Look*

**Who Are The Greasers?**

…Then there were the Greasers. The inspiration for these youngsters came from the hit movie *The Wild One* based on a California motorcycle club, and they took their name from a term used to address Mexican immigrants who greased carts in the 1800s, as a form of **rebellion**. The immigrants were considered shameful, so by taking their name after them was the Greasers way of “sticking it to the man.”



*Scene from “The Wild One”*

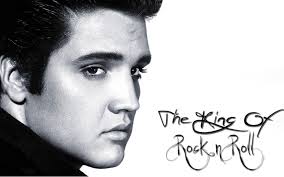
This triggered a style that rejected society’s expectations. Black leather jackets, white t-shirts, and a good ol’ fashion pair of jeans and you were good to go. But it was not just the outfits that made them look the part. The true sign of a Greaser was in the hair, which was always nice and long in the front; long enough to be styled in the pompadour manner, all shiny and greasy.



**Influences on Greaser Style**

It is still debated today as to why the Greaser rebellious style came about but a common theory is that is was a way for the teens who were just coming of age to create their own scene to be excited about. Now that they couldn’t look to joining the war efforts and being celebrated for being veterans as adults, they wanted to create a new fad to get noticed, and that fad was to be seen as a bad boy. The type of boy “no girl would dare to go out with.”

The style was influenced by rock ‘n’ roll and the king himself: Elvis Presley. He was famous for the **pompadour** hairstyle and was worshiped by the Greasers.  It was this **infatuation** with Elvis that influence the seize the day attitude of Greasers.



To look the part of their cool-boy façade the Greasers chose to cruise in style in hot rod cars. These fast cars were just another signature of this bad boy crew.



Although they were mostly harmless, and the biggest rebellion rooted in a simple change in looks the Greasers are a memorable crew from the post-war era who paved the way for a lot of rebels who were looking to stand out in the future, even Britain’s Teddy Boys.

Resources:

[Morgan, Linda. “Insight through Suffering: Cruelty in Adolescent Fiction about Boys.” The English Journal 69, no. 9 (1980): 56-59. Accessed March 27, 2015.](http://www.jstor.org/stable/816383.)

[“1950s Greasers: Styles, Trends, History & Pictures.” RetroWaste. January 1, 2014. Accessed March 27, 2015](http://www.retrowaste.com/1950s/fashion-in-the-1950s/1950s-greasers-styles-trends-history-pictures/)

[Mail, Mary. “Teenagers Social Code “Preposterous”” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 4, 1956. Accessed April 16, 2015.](http://search.proquest.com.une.idm.oclc.org/docview/148775473/DA3243A645804432PQ/3?accountid=12756)

Glossary

1. **audacity** - the willingness to take bold risks.

2. **drastic** - likely to have a strong or far-reaching effect; radical and extreme.

3. **imperative** - of vital importance; crucial.

4. **luxury** – the state of great comfort and extravagant living.

5. **glamorous** – beautiful, attractive, or lovely

6. **embodied** - be an expression of or give a tangible or visible form to (an idea, quality, or feeling).

7. **rebellion** - the action or process of resisting authority, control, or convention.

8. **pompadour** - a man's hairstyle in which the hair is combed up from the forehead without a part.

9. **infatuation** - an intense but short-lived passion or admiration for someone or something.